



General Assembly

January Session, 2003

Raised Bill No. 6533

LCO No. 3734

Referred to Committee on Government Administration and Elections

Introduced by:
(GAE)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR REFORMING THE ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCESS TO PREVENT FRAUD AND ABUSE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Commission" means the State Elections Enforcement
- 3 Commission; and
- 4 (2) "Designee" means (A) a person who is caring for an absentee
- 5 ballot applicant because of the applicant's illness or physical disability,
- 6 including but not limited to, a licensed physician or a registered or
- 7 practical nurse, or (B) a member of any such applicant's family, who is
- 8 designated by an absentee ballot applicant and who consents to such
- 9 designation.
- 10 (b) Notwithstanding any provision of title 9 of the general statutes,
- 11 the State Elections Enforcement Commission shall establish a pilot
- 12 program for absentee voting at the municipal elections and primaries
- 13 held in fifteen municipalities in 2003. The commission shall notify
- 14 municipalities of the opportunity to participate in the pilot program

15 and shall select three municipalities from each congressional district,
16 including both municipalities interested in participating and any other
17 municipalities. In making such selections, the commission shall rank
18 all municipalities in each congressional district from highest
19 population to lowest population, and select one municipality in the
20 highest third of such ranking, one municipality in the middle third of
21 such ranking, and one municipality in the lowest third of such ranking.

22 (c) The provisions of chapter 145 of the general statutes shall apply
23 in each municipality participating in the pilot program, except that:

24 (1) Only municipal clerks, registrars of voters and absentee ballot
25 coordinators appointed by registrars of voters may issue absentee
26 ballot applications;

27 (2) Such officials may issue absentee ballot applications only to
28 persons who (A) request such applications for themselves, (B) have
29 been identified by candidates or political parties as potential absentee
30 voters, or (C) are designees;

31 (3) For a municipal election, each registrar of voters shall appoint at
32 least one absentee ballot coordinator for each two hundred persons
33 who voted by absentee ballot in the most recent municipal election. For
34 a municipal primary, each registrar of voters shall appoint at least one
35 absentee ballot coordinator for each two hundred persons who voted
36 by absentee ballot in the most recent municipal primary. A registrar of
37 voter's appointment of an absentee ballot coordinator shall not be
38 effective until the registrar files the appointment with the municipal
39 clerk;

40 (4) Absentee ballot coordinators serving in a municipality shall be
41 residents of such municipality (A) who apply for such positions, or (B)
42 whose names are submitted by candidates or slates of candidates at the
43 election or primary or by political parties. Absentee ballot coordinators
44 may not be municipal employees or members of a town committee or
45 be employed by, or volunteer for, any campaign or political party;

46 (5) Absentee ballot coordinators shall be compensated by the
47 municipalities appointing the coordinators, receive training in
48 absentee voting procedures by the appointing registrar or registrars of
49 voters, and be sworn to the faithful performance of their duties as
50 election officials, in accordance with the provisions of section 9-231 of
51 the general statutes;

52 (6) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision,
53 only absentee ballot coordinators may be present and provide
54 assistance to an applicant in completing an absentee ballot application
55 outside of the office of a registrar of voters or a municipal clerk. In the
56 case of a municipal election, two absentee ballot coordinators of
57 different political parties, and in the case of a primary, two absentee
58 ballot coordinators representing competing slates or candidates in the
59 primary, shall jointly provide such assistance to an applicant residing
60 in the municipality who requests it. Each coordinator who provides
61 such assistance shall sign the application in the space provided. One or
62 both of such coordinators shall deliver the completed application to
63 the municipal clerk not later than two business days after the date of
64 completion of the application. This section shall not apply to
65 supervised voting at institutions under section 9-159q or 9-159r of the
66 general statutes; and

67 (B) A designee of an ill or physically disabled applicant may also be
68 present and provide assistance to an applicant in completing an
69 absentee ballot application. The persons listed in subsection (a) of
70 section 9-140b of the general statutes may also assist in the return of
71 absentee ballot applications;

72 (7) Each absentee ballot coordinator shall account to the municipal
73 clerk for blank absentee ballot applications issued by the coordinator;

74 (8) When a municipal clerk or a registrar of voters provides
75 assistance to an absentee ballot applicant in the office or the clerk or
76 registrar, such official shall also sign the application; and

77 (9) The list of absentee ballot applicants who have executed
78 applications shall remain confidential until the third business day
79 before an election or primary.

80 (d) The State Elections Enforcement Commission shall have the
81 power to enforce the provisions of this section to the same extent as the
82 commission has the power to enforce provisions of election statutes
83 under section 9-7b of the general statutes.

84 (e) After the municipal elections and primaries held in 2003, the
85 State Elections Enforcement Commission shall survey election officials
86 and participants in the fifteen municipalities participating in the pilot
87 program for absentee voting. Not later than January 15, 2004, the
88 commission shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations
89 concerning the pilot program to the joint standing committee of the
90 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>

Statement of Purpose:

To ensure the integrity of the absentee voting process.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]